

Rich Treasure in Earthen Vessels.

A SERMON
Preached (*Jan. 1. 1663.*) at the
FUNERAL
OF

That Reverend and faithful Servant of Jesus Christ,

Mr. *JAMES NALTON*,

Late Minister of God's Word at St. *LEONARDS*
Foster-Lane.

(71)

By *T. HORTON*, D.D.

*Your Fathers, where are they? and the
Prophets, do they live for ever?*

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ASERMON

Preached at the Anniversary of the

GENERAL

OF

THE

MR. JAMES YALTON

At the Anniversary of the

BY J. YALTON, D.D.

1699

John Yalton, D.D. is the author of this

LONDON: Printed in the Year 1699.

To the READER.

Courteous Reader,

I Do here present unto thee a Sermon
preached by a Reverend and Learned
Minister in this City, at the Funeral
of that faithful, godly, and truly consci-
entious Minister of Jesus Christ, Mr. James
Nalton, whose Name is as a precious
Ointment poured forth unto all the godly
in this Nation: He was one of those pre-
cious sons of Zion (of whom the world is
not worthy) ejected by men, but now taken
into a better Living by the great Bishop of
souls. Surely Englands sins are very great
and hainous, that have turned God and
Man against us. Our Teachers are thrown
into corners by men, and called away from
us by God. Oh that our eyes could run down
with Rivers of tears! but who layes this so
heart? the righteous are despised, rejected,
and taken away, but no man regards it, of
our wrestling Jacobs, our Moses's in the

gap, our praying Elijahs, our weeping Jeremiah, be called home, Lord, what will become of England! whose prayers will be instrumental to remove those judgments incumbent, and prevent those which are imminent: if the mourners in Zion cease from among us, surely then 'tis not only our duty, but our safety to pray for (and consequently bewaile the loss of) their lives, who are our Fathers, the chariots & horsemen of England, for whose sake this Nation is kept from the judgements of Sodom & Gomorrah, yet guilty of greater abominations, I shall say no more, but commend this Sermon to thy reading, and intreat that candor from thee, that if thou findest any errata in words or phrases, or any thing that seems imperfect, not to impute it to the reverend and learned Dispenser, but to the Transcriber hereof. So I commend thee to God, Farewell.

Rich



Rich treasure in Earthen Vessels, &c.

2 Cor. 4. 7.

But we have this Treasure in Earthen Vessels, that the excellency of the Power may be of God, and not of us.



Here is nothing so excellent or compleat in this World, but hath its diminishment and qualifications; and something that doth dispraise it, and abates of the excellency thereof; not the things of this World onely, but spiritual things in some sort, as to enjoy them, and partake of them in this life, have their inconveniences and disparagements annexed; and are mingled with something that abates of their worth; an instance of which we have here in this present Scripture which the Apostle Paul signifies to us concerning the enjoyment of the Ministry of the Gospel of Christ. He had in the verbe before the Text, told us the great priviledge that both Ministers and others had in having the glorious Gospel, viz. *The light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ*, shining into our hearts;

hearts; the consideration of which is of great encouragement to us; yet adds this as a qualification of it, viz. *But we have this treasure in earthen Vessels, &c.* That which doth qualifie it, is, That this excellent treasure hath its conveyances through weak and mean persons, men of frailty and mortality, In the words there are two main parts:

I. The Dispensation it self.

II. The Account of it.

I. The Dispensation it self, This *Treasure* we have in earthen Vessels, &c.

II. The account of it, *That the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.*

I shall begin with the first, the Dispensation it self, which hath two branches.

1. The *Depositum*, the thing laid up.

2. The *Repository* in which this Treasure is laid up.

First, The *Depositum*, or thing laid up, which is a *Treasure*; and what is this Treasure, but the Gospel of Jesus Christ? The Gospel is a Treasure according to a twofold consideration:

In respect of the $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} 1. \text{ Matter} \\ 2. \text{ Ministry} \end{array} \right\}$ of it.

Both make up a treasure. The Matter of it, the things of the Gospel are rich things, and the conveyances of it; the Ministerial gifts and ability, by which the Gospel is administered, do make up the Treasure: 'Tis a Treasure in both respects.

1. In respect of the matter of it; therefore it is we read of the *Riches of Christ*, of the *Riches of the Gospel*. The Scripture makes mention of three things wherein the Gospel is agreeable to a treasure.

1. A Treasure is a thing of dignity and worth; 'tis not a company of pebbles (though many) that will make up a Treasure; a Treasure consists of things of worth and dignity; and thus is the Gospel; in it are contained excellent and admirable truths, the Mysteries of salvation by Christ; the doctrine of the Gospel brings glad tidings of peace and reconciliation with God in Christ; there we have the gifts and graces of God; there we have

have glory and immortality, &c. and those things in the Gospel are admitted to us : there is no science in the world brings such treasure as this.

2. The Gospel is a treasure for variety, abundance, and plurality. 'Tis not one thing of worth, but many that makes up a treasure; if few, yet much worth must be comprehended in them ; so in the Gospel we have the manifold wisdom of God, the rich treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge. The Gospel, though it be but one for substance, yet 'tis many for improvements : 'tis a chain of many links; one faith, but diverse articles of it; so it is a treasure in that respect.

3. 'Tis a treasure for its closeness ; We do not open a treasure to every one, but it is kept close. The Gospel is a secret mystery, hidden, not revealed to every one ; it is not discovered to carnal worldly men, though it may be revealed to them in the outward proposition, yet not in the spirituality of it. *But where shall wisdom be found? and where is the place of understanding?* (saith Job, ch. 28. v. 12.) The peace of the Gospel is a treasure hid in the field, not found by every one.

2. The Gospel is a treasure in respect of the ministry of it ; so the Apostle hints, 'tis not onely light, but a shining light, which hath shined into our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, &c. 'Tis a treasure in this respect; viz. in the discovery and shining of it, the conveyances, the several gifts and graces of the ministry, by which the Gospel is conveyed to us, makes up a treasure; and as the Ministry is a treasure, so the opportunities and advantages thereof are. Thus the Gospel and the Ministry thereof is precious, and ought to be esteemed and made use of by us. We should highly account of the Gospel, and put a high value on it, for it is a treasure; yes, it is a treasure in the want of other treasures, they are rich that are made partakers of it; *Silver and Gold have I none.* (saith S. Peter to the Cripple) *but such as I have I give it thee.* this is the priviledge of Ministers; though it may be, poor in respect of themselves, yet are rich to others. These excellent riches are committed to us, and accordingly we must not only make use of them our selves, but make them known to others; the Gospel is a treasure not for us to keep up, but to discover, reveal and manifest to others; to give the light of the glory of God, &c. This is the work of the Ministry.

nistry, We have indeed this treasure, but not for our selves only, but for others; so we are to keep it, to preserve and maintain it, but so as to be diligent to impart what is committed to us for the edification of others: *Every Scribe instructed in the Kingdom of Heaven as a good householder, bringeth forth things new and old.*

The Gospel is a treasure, therefore we ought to carry our selves answerable to it: As

1. We must labour for it, be diligent in the search of it, dig for it as for *hidden treasures*. *Lift up thy voice for understanding,* &c. *Prov. 2. 2, 3, 4.* Dig for it; you know there is a great deal of pains taken, and labour used to get Worldly treasure, What would not men venture for it? they will go over Sea and Land, go through fire and water, expose themselves to all dangers for earthly treasure, *make unto themselves friends of the Mammon of unrighteousness,* pass away a great deal of time, and take a great deal of care for it.

2. Esteem this treasure; this heavenly wisdom, this Evangelical knowledge, even the Gospel of Christ, labour to understand it, and have the efficacy wrought upon your hearts.

3. Rejoyce in it; how do men rejoyce in earthly treasure; so should we, as the Merchant in the Gospel when he had found the Pearl of Prize, rejoyced exceedingly; so we ought, as being made partakers thereof. *I rejoyced at thy word, even as one that had found great spoils.* (saith David) so should we rejoyce always in this treasure. 'Tis said of those that late under John Baptists Ministry, that they rejoyced but for a while, and that is the condition and misery of many. The City of *Samaria* when they had received the Gospel, 'tis said they had great joy, *Act. 8. 9.*

4. Be careful to keep and preserve it, for it is a treasure, and therefore we must treasure it up in our hearts; and the rather because it will keep us. It keeps (as *Chrysostome* saith) the house where it is; other treasures cannot secure themselves, but if we keep this treasure it will secure us. *Discretion shall preserve thee, and understanding shall keep thee.* *Prov. 2. 11.* thus you see the excellency of this spiritual wisdom. So much for the first thing considerable in the first branch, viz. the *Depository*, the treasure.

The second thing considerable is, the *Repository*, i.e. Earthen Vessels, or vessels of Earth. earthen Pitchers: these are the *Repository*, but we have this treasure in earthen vessels, &c. *Earth is a*
word

word of diminution, and disparagement; and that in three regards:

- 1 In regard of its meanness and baseness.
- 2 In regard of its foulness and pollution.
- 3 In regard of its frailty and transitoriness.

'Tis passing away in all these respects; these earthen vessels in the Text, is to be understood, the Apostles and Ministers of Jesus Christ, in regard of their outward man are so called, and are so according to this threefold notion.

I. In regard of their meanness; their outside is mean, either for person, or sometimes for estate, body, & outward deportment. This was the condition (you know) of the first Ministers of Christ, mean and ordinary persons outwardly God made use of. Nay our Master, our blessed Lord and Saviour was mean in regard of his humane birth, and reckoned of by most men according to his birth and parentage. So it is with the servants of Christ, they are in their persons generally base, mean, low, and accordingly rendred despicable to the eyes of the World.

II. In regard of foulness and pollution; Ministers are called earthen Vessels, they have many weaknesses, they are men subject to the like passions as others. 'Tis true the Ministers of Christ have greater advantages then others, in regard of their education, knowledge, gifts, and employments, being more free from those defilements and snares that others are intangled in: yet through the remainders of the flesh in them, they have many infirmities: so Satan watches them more then others, lays more snares for them in regard of their parts and employments; so that they are more subject to his temptations then others. Satan hath a desire to sift them (as the Apostle *Peter*) as wheat, because he knows they will draw many after them; so that they must needs be subject to many weaknesses and infirmities. Sometimes God makes use of the worst sort of men, even the most vicious and malicious; first he changeth them, and then makes use of them as instruments of glory. The Apostle *Paul* was a Vessel of Election to carry the name of Christ unto the Gentiles; yet in times past a great persecutor. So it pleaseth God to make use of such, that the excellency of the power may be of God, &c.

III. Ministers are called Earthen Vessels in regard of the frailty and mortality of their persons, and earthen Vessels are soon crake and broken. Ministers are subject to many infirmities of body: This Heavenly light of the Gospel shineth often through Lanthorns of glass, which are soon broken, Ministers have weak and frail bodies: *Timothy* had his bodily infirmities, and *Trophimus* was left sick at *Miletum*, 2 Tim. 4. 20. and *Ephraim* was sick nigh unto death, *Phil.* 2. 27. And *Paul* had need of *Luca* the Phyfician, probably in regard of his weakness. Thus the servants of God are subject to many infirmities. Besides the reasons in the Text, there are other reasons why God will have it so.

1. That they may be more compassionate, and more sensible of the weaknesses of others, for *likeness of condition breeds sympathy of affection.*

Men are apt to pity those in the like condition with themselves; so our Lord took our nature upon him, that he might pity us; he took flesh and blood upon him, he was tempted in all things like unto us, but without sin, that so he might succour those that are tempted: So his servants many of them are much tempted, which may breed in them a sympathy of affection to others that are in such a condition.

2. God will have it so, that *Ministers* may have the more experience of the truths they preach to others concerning an afflicted condition; those that have had no sickness or other affliction, cannot preach from experience of such truths that concern such a condition, they cannot preach so feelingly and savory as others; when they have been under affliction, they will know what affliction is, both in the nature of it, and the comforts of it, and God's gracious assistance therein; and so they may speak comfortably, and be enabled to comfort others, as the Apostle *Paul* speaks.

3. God is pleased so to order it sometimes for their humiliation, to keep them low, that so they may not be lifted up by reason of extraordinary manifestations and impartments; thus *St. Paul* had given him a thorn in the flesh, that Messenger of Satan so buffet him, lest he should be exalted above measure, 2 Cor. 12. 7. A thorn was given him, &c. ('tis twice repeated both in the beginning and end of the verse) that so this thorn in the flesh might keep

keep out pride in the heart, that so they may have a more low, meek, and humble frame of spirit, and thereby fitted and prepared for greater services. And

4. That they may be also more conformable to those they have to deal with, *Israel* desires *Moses* to speak to them (and not God) why? because he was like unto them, and would therefore compassionate them; from whom they therefore desired to receive the commands of God. Thus it pleaseth God to deal with his servants, that as they may pity those they have to deal with, so likewise to draw the affections of their people unto them, to make them more loving, and the more to attend on their Ministry, seeing they are so fleeting, and going away; it pleased God that *Epaphroditus* should be sick even to death, to endear the *Philippians* more to him, chap. 2.25.28. that their love and tenderness may be drawn forth the more by the discovery of his frailty. Let us improve this.

Use 1. First, as to Ministers, see how the condition is with us in our Calling; We are *Earthen Vessels*, taken out of dust; We should often consider our frailty, to make us more humble, more meek, and more compassionate to others, more diligent in doing good, that we may make amends for our frailty and natural weakness that are upon us: We must not think much of it, it being no more then in former times; it was the condition of the Apostles themselves, they were Earthen Vessels, they had such weaknesses upon them, men subject to the like passions as we.

Use 2. Secondly, As for the people, this they may improve in all the notions and considerations of an Earthen Vessel.

First, In regard of the meanness, you must not esteem the gospel according to the vessel, according to the disparagement of the Vessel; a Vessel of dishonor in respect of its matter, may be a Vessel of honor in regard of the gold that is in it; those Members of the body that are weak, and in themselves less honorable, we afford a great deal of honor upon them, in decking and cloathing them: So the Ministers Work and Employment, and the Doctrines they bring, are excellent and of great use; when all is done, we have that we serve for; according to the employment we are put to, we are honorable, though outwardly Wicked and base men are called filij terra, they are of the earth,

earth, Job 30.8. *Children of fools, yea children of base men; they are viler than the earth, i. e.* Men of no account (as one saith) the earth groans under such ingracious persons; but gracious persons are Vessels of honor; as it was said of the giants of old, so it may be said of these, *They are men of Renown*; and so we should esteem of them. Worldly men look at the outside, and so esteem of them; so was Christ dealt with, *Is not this the Carpenters Son?* So those Teachers in Corinth, endeavoured to render St. Paul his presence weak, and his speech contemptible, 2 Cor. 10. 11. that so they might make his Ministry contemptible also. But this glorious Treasure is in Earthen Vessels; *You know (saith St. Paul) Gal. 4. 13. that through infirmity of the flesh I preached the Gospel unto you at first. This was their commendation, v. 14. But my temptation which was in my flesh, you despised not, nor rejected, but received me as an Angel of God, even as Christ Jesus.*

All his weaknesses, and what ever was matter of discouragement, they did not despise, but honourably entertained him even as Christ himself. So it was the commendation of the Thessalonians, 1 Thess. 2. 13. that they received not the word as the word of man, but (as it is in truth) the word of God, looking to the mighty God to make it effectual: so should all others do upon this consideration.

2. Seeing Ministers are earthen Vessels in regard of moral infirmities which adhere to them; in respect of their corruptions and weaknesses judge of them as men: but esteem of what is righteous in them; though they have great advantages against sin, and be very careful against sin, yet notwithstanding they are not totally exempted and freed from sin; as they are Ministers, so they are men.

3. In regard that Ministers are earthen Vessels in respect of their frailty. Seeing then they are so frail and transitory, therefore accordingly you should make use of them, deal kindly and affectionately with them, in that they are quickly broken. What is sooner broken than a Glass, or an earthen vessel? Ministers are quickly taken away, and therefore you should be tender of them while you have them. Where are all the Fathers, *Do the Prophets live for ever?* the Word of the Lord indeed endureth for ever, but the Preacher of it doth not; the Gospel is eternal, but the Dispenser is mortal; the Calling is lasting, but the Minister

is transitory; and therefore you should carry your selves With all tenderness and respect to them: take heed of grieving their spirits, seeing they are so soon broken. Endeavour also to improve by them, and to get as much good as you can by them. It is a great argument *to work while it is day, because the night comes when no man can work*: whilst God affords means and opportunities, make use of them: we are but passengers; therefore this is a great ground for you to endeavor to get all the good you can by your Ministers, seeing they are frail.

Lastly, By way of improvement: Take notice of the ways of God as different from mans; God puts excellent treasure into *Earthen Vessels*; we keep treasures in strong holds, in the strongest Repositories. God's wayes are not as our wayes, he goes another way then we do; he makes use of the poorest, meanest, and most frail creatures sometimes; he lays aside many times men of greater abilities, parts and quality, and makes use of weaker to do this great Work. *Chrysostome* makes an expostulation, If it be excellent treasure, why in *earthen vessels*? Therefore it is a Vessel of Earth, because an excellent Treasure. Thus Gods ways are unsearchable: This is the improvement.

Now besides this interpretation given of it, there is another that will not be impertinent. Some understand by *Earthen Vessels*, the expressions, words and phrases of the Ministry, through which the doctrines and truths of the Gospel are conveyed; this is agreeable to what went before: Some false Teachers in *Corinth* pleased themselves with eloquent and enticing words of worldly wisdom, and so endeavoured to render *Pauls* preaching despicable, in regard of the plainness of it; therefore (saith the Apostle) we have this treasure in earthen vessels, *b. e.* familiar conveyances, that so we may easily understand it.

Thus I have explained this Earthen Vessel, and so have done with the first considerable part, *viz.* the dispensation it self, *This Treasure we have in Earthen Vessels*: I come now to the second, *viz.*

II. The account of this Dispensation; That the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us, Which words may be considered two ways.

1. Either absolutely, as lying in themselves. Or,

2. Connexively; to the words before going.

1. Take them absolutely as they lie in themselves, and two things are exhibited.

1. The excellency of the Gospel and Ministry itself, called Power.

2. The Author and Original of it, laid down two ways, positively, of *God*; and negatively, *not of us*.

1. The excellency of the Gospel and Ministry thereof, called Power: There is a great deal of power and efficacy in the Gospel, 'tis in its nature powerful and efficacious; so the Ministry of it, *Rom. 1. 16. I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. See 1 Cor. 2. 4. Paul's preaching was in the demonstration of the Spirit and of Power, &c. 'Tis called the Arm of God's Power, the sword of the Spirit, Eph. 6. 17. 'Tis quick and powerful, and sharper then any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit, &c. Heb. 4. 12. and many other places. We may conceive it to be so according to the various effects and consequences of it, viz. as to*

1. Conviction.

2. Conversion.

3. Consolation.

1. 'Tis powerful in regard of conviction, 'tis a word of conviction; and one part of the Work of the Ministry is (by the Spirits co-operation) *to convince the world of sin*, to open mens eyes, to shew them the vileness of their wayes, to discover such courses to be sinful; the Conscience is awakened by the Spirit in the Ministry of the Word, herein 'tis powerful and efficacious: There are divers instances in Scripture, how powerful the Word hath been in point of conviction; in *Felix*, the Apostle *Paul* preached to him of *righteousness and judgement to come, &c.* He trembles: The Judge on the Bench trembleth at the Word delivered by the Prisoner at the Bar: So powerful is the Ministry of the Word, as to discover our sinfulness. So the Disciples going to *Emas*, their hearts burnt within them when our Saviour opened to them the *Prophecy, &c.* So it was with *St. Peters* Auditors, *Acts 2.* they were pricked in the heart when they heard *this*; he did preach to them in the power and demonstration of the Spirit,

spirit, and plainly discovered that sin that they were more especially guilty of, and when they heard *that*, they were pricked in the heart, &c.

2. It is a word of Conversion also; Conviction is one thing, and Conversion is another. Sometimes men may be convinced, but yet have no change wrought in them; therefore conversion is another work, it is a turning men from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to God, &c. to receive an inheritance among them that are sanctified. Herein is the Word powerful, *viz.* in regeneration, I have begotten you (by the Word) to a lively hope, &c. of his own will hath he begotten you, &c.

3 It is a word of comfort and consolation, it is a powerful word, and able to comfort the heart: and the Ministry is very effectual herein (when set on by the Spirit) to quiet, satisfy, and pacify the consciences of men, which declareth the remission of sin, and whosoever sins are forgiven, must needs be comforted. Indeed it is not in the power of men to forgive sins, yet they can speak a word of comfort in season, by the administration of the promises (the Spirit of God going along with them) and then they are not only declarative, but operative. Where (I say) it pleaseth God to bless and sanctify the Word, it is effectual for the quieting of the mind, for pacifying of the conscience, and settling of the troubled soul. Thus you see how powerful the Ministry is; and seeing it is so, this should teach us how to behave our selves under it; it is powerful in it self, and powerful in its dispensation, and hath none of that weakness (mentioned before) of the dispenser of it, *I was with you* (saith S. Paul) *in much weakness, and in fear; and in trembling*, 1 Cor. 2. 3, 4. *and my speech---was in demonstration of the Spirit, and of power.* These may seem to be contradictory; but 'tis answered, the Word is powerful in the demonstration of the Spirit, though delivered by one of humane weakness, as before is declared. This spiritual power we should look at, and labour after; which power doth not consist in matter of elocution, *the enticing words of mans wisdom*, nor in matter of voice, which indeed is a good thing, and suitable to the nature of the matter: a quick and powerful delivery is of great efficacy, and power, for the setting home of truths. Yet this doth not make a powerful Ministry; for a whisper in the ear may cause a thunderbolt in the conscience: the power lies first

in the nature of the matter; the matter consists in the nature and condition of mankind, the certainty of judgment, the necessity of Christ, the covenant of Grace, and the graces and privileges thereof, &c. These carry a great deal of power and efficacy with them when they are carefully and frequently dispensed, and Gods spirit going along with them, so they become powerful; for the Ministry consists not in empty notions and speculations that will only tickle the fancy, but never reach the conscience. Moral discourses, though they be of great use, yet if we rest in them, they leave us as they found us. Evangelical truths (which are manifold) are to be delivered in the Ministry. Now as the matter of the Ministry must be powerful, so the expressions must be powerful; there should be substantiality of expression to the matter, *b. e.* with gravity, sobriety, affection, &c. Strong lines make but weak preaching, and take away the efficacy; but delivering truths in the demonstration of the spirit and in power, that is most effectual: when we speak feelingly and from our hearts, it comes then (through the blessing of the Lord with it) with power. This is then to learn us of the Ministry, *viz.* 1. Use.

Let us be careful that the matter of our Ministry be powerful, so that the handling and dispensing thereof be powerful, that so it may come home to the conscience; thus we should deal with all; *the words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened by the Masters of assemblies, &c, Eccl. 12, 11.* So our words should have a force and power in them. This as the Apostle says, is mighty and powerful to the beating down of strong holds, &c.

Use, 2. Secondly in reference to hearers; seeing the Ministry is powerful, you must then submit your selves to the power of it. Many people are Sermon-proof, and think to stand it out against the power of the Word; but if it comes in power to the conscience, they will not be able to resist it; as it is said of them in the Gospel, they were not able to resist the spirit by which he spake (*viz.* Stephen.) And for those that desire the conversion of others, what course should be taken by them for that end? but by good counsel, instruction, prayer, and good example, to endeavour to convince them, and more especially to bring them to the Word and administrations thereof, which God hath sanctified for this end.

So much for the excellency of the Gospel, viz. *The excellency of the power, &c.* I come to the second:

2. The Author of it, 1. Positively, it is of God. And 2. Negatively, it is not of us.

First, positively, it is of God, and that in all the considerations of it, in the full extent of it, it is of God. So the Ministerial gifts, the performances of it, and the success of it, are all from God.

First, Ministerial gifts are from God; it is he that makes us able Ministers of the New Testament; there are (saith the Apostle Paul) diversity of gifts: to one is given *the Word of wisdom*, to another *the Word of knowledge by the same Spirit*, &c. 1 Cor. 12. 4, 5, 6. It is God that bestows every good gift.

Secondly, The performance also is from God; his grace concurs and assists therein; the habit and the act are both from him; God gives gifts to men, and he enables them to dispence them. Ministerial employments are not only for general, but particular applications, and so need not only general, but particular assistances; *That I might be enabled* (saith St. Paul) *to fulfil the work*, &c. *the Lord stood by me and strengthened me, that my preaching might be fully accomplished.*

It is God that makes the work powerful, efficacious and successful: Alas! when we have used our best endeavours, all the success is from him, he must make it effectual; it is said, our Saviour went about doing good, for God was with him, enclining him to the work, and assisting him therein: So he is with all his servants: their gifts, employments, and success thereof, are all of God, not of us.

Obj. But it may be objected, Is all from God, and nothing from us? Are we not said to concur with him? and is not then the power partly ours?

Ans. I answer, No: 'tis of God, and not of us; we are indeed subjects of the Ministry, the Recipients thereof, persons employed in the Work, and therefore are said to be *workers together with God*, 2 Cor. 6. 1. but the power and efficacy thereof is from God alone: Paul and Apollos are but Ministers; 'tis God that giveth the blessing; 'tis not of us in two respects, 1. 'Tis not merited by us, 'tis not of our deserving, nor of our procuring; 1. 'Tis not of our deserving; the best & most accom-

accomplisht do not merit it: I received mercy (saith Paul,) to be faithful; he accounted it a mercy to be employed; and to be faithful therein. 2. 'Tis not of our own procuring, we do not obtain it by our own power, as Peter said in the recovery of the lame man, *It is not by any power and holiness of ours, that this man is restored, &c.* and so it is not our gifts and industry onely, that will make our Ministry powerful; and therefore in this Work let us be looking up to God, and desire him to assist us, as Moses said, *If thou goest not, O Lord, up with us, wherefore should we go hence?* so say I, If the presence of God be not with us, what can we do?

And further, when we do partake of any measure of ability, see where we must determinate it; *Not unto us Lord; not unto us, but unto thy Name be all the glory.* We must not sacrifice to our own net, nor give the honor to our own industry, but wholly give the praise to God, because the excellency is of God.

2. But in the second place, if you look upon the words reflexively, or as having their connexion to the words going before, and so they will agree and hold together; and thus you may read them: Therefore is this *Treasure in earthen vessels*, that the excellency of the Power may be acknowledg'd to be of God, and not of us: If it were in Angels, or had we never so strong bodies, yet the excellency of the power of God would not be so clearly seen, as it is now, being laid up in poor, frail Vessels: Here's the power of God, here's the lustre and glory of God most manifested; for so much the more apparently it will be seen to be from God, by so much the weaker the instrument is, that is employed by God; therefore if any thing doth act beyond its own power, it must have some foreign powers for the producing such and such acts; therefore when we see any great matter done by poor, frail and contemptible persons of earthen vessels, this doth plainly shew the excellency of the power to be of God, and not of men; therefore look from man to God, it is God that doth these things; we should overlook earthen Vessels; we should (I say) overlook men that are these earthen vessels, and look to God that makes the Ministry powerful in such conveyences as these are.

Further.

Furthermore, It may satisfie us of the Ministry, in that we are Vessels, *viz.* men of frailty, &c. we are apt to be discouraged, and to think hardly that we are followed with so many weakneses; that we have a hard matter, that when we have taken such pains in the work of the Ministry, we should be thus rewarded; but this should satisfie us, the more weaknes in us, the greater honor will come to Christ; *This Treasure we have in earthen Vessels, that the excellency of the Power may be of God, and not of us.* The weaker the Vessel, the more honor will redound to Christ.

Furthermore, this may take off the servants of Christ from unwillingness unto those works and performances which God calls them unto, by reason of their weakness: Thus it is when God calls to any work or employment, the servants of God are apt to plead their own inability; *Moses* sayes he is not eloquent, *Jeremiah* sayes he is a child, *Jonah* sayes he is a man of unclean lips: Thus we have their delayes, their excuses, whereby they endeavour to discharge themselves from that Work that God calls them to, by their own weakness, &c. but God refuses such excuses; for who makes the blind to see, the dumb to speak, but God? It is he that touched *Isaiah's* lips; it is he that said to *Jeremiah*, Do not say thou art a child, for *I have sent thee*, &c. This I say then is a consideration that may encourage Ministers in their Work, that the weaker they are, the honor and glory will redound to Christ; *for he said unto me, (saith the Apostle) My Grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness*: Not that this is an encouragement or argument for any to take upon them the great work of the Ministry, without sufficient qualifications & abilities: But where there is not that degree of ability as is desired, where there is a true sensibleness of their weakness, this may be an encouragement unto them, that God delighteth to shew his power in them, that by so much the more they are weak, so much honor he wil gain. For a conclusion, it comes to this, *viz.*

That we lay no stress upon any outward things.

There is no stress or happiness in these outward things; those that seem to be of some concernment, as strength of body, and other outward qualifications that are of remark;
yet

yet consider, they are fading and transitory; this should teach us in the enjoyments of outward things, a great deal of humility: Though we are Vessels of gold in regard of the treasure and improvement, yet in regard of ourselves we are Vessels of Earth, and so should be in respect of humility. Let us look upon all these things as given to us of God: even for this very end, That we may be more serviceable to him and his people.

So I have done with the two general parts of the words, and so with the whole verse, *viz. We have this Treasure in earthen Vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.*

Do we begin again to commend our selves? (saith the Apostle Paul, 2 Cor. 3. 1.) or need we Epistles of commendation to you, or Letters of commendation from you? ye are our epistle in our hearts, &c. But this is applicable to the present sad occasion now before us.

This reverend and blessed man of God, Mr. James Nalton, was a person of great note and eminencie among us, one well known in this City, and in this place, where he spent his labour and pains many years: I could give large accounts and testimonies of him (if need were) from my own knowledge of him, having been acquainted with him many years. He was not only a Minister, but the son of a Minister, his birth and education suiting together. He lookt upon it not only as an honour, but as an engagement to be careful to walk in those steps set before him; and to continue the work of the Ministry begun by his religious father. Certainly the children of godly and holy parents cannot come off so cheap in their carriages as others; they have greater accounts to make, as having greater examples set before them, greater advantages of prayer, exhortation, &c. and so greater engagements; this was thought on, and observed by him. And as he was the son of a Minister, so when he came to years and was fitted, he took upon him the Ministry: as he was one of great abilities, so accordingly he discharged them faithfully

fully and conscientiously. He was a spiritual, powerful, conscientious Preacher, he preached by his Life; for (as *Erasmus* saith) we should not only love to speak truths, but we should digest truths on our own hearts before we commend them to others, and so they will be the more effectual. He was a man of a very meek, sweet, and humble spirit; a man of great humility and of great meekness in the midst of great abilities, which was a great ornament in him; a man full of tenderness and condescension to others; a man of a very yeilding and melting frame of spirit, soon dissolved into tears. It was the saying of one, that a good man is full of tears; so this good man was full of tears, not affected, but very real, and hearty, drawn from the fullness of his Spirit, as the Apostle *Paul* saith, he served the Lord in much humility and many tears. This was remarkable, that in these times our Reverend Brother was full of tears in delivering his doctrine, which was suitable to the age we live in, being full of sin and calamity; there is much need of a bewailing spirit to bewail the iniquities and miseries of the times; they that cannot bewail themselves, need the tears of others. He was a man of great integrity, and single-heartedness; in his exhortations he had much of the simplicity of Christ, as the Apostle *Paul* speaks. In reference to the Ministry, he had no worldly and base affections, he had no carnal designs therein; but his chief design was to bring souls home to Christ, that was his chief business. As the Apostle saith of himself, may also be said of him, that *in simplicity and godly sincerity, he had his conversation in the world, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by the manifestation of the truth, commending himself to every mans conscience in the sight of God, 2 Cor. 4. 2.* He was a man that had ability to speak a word in season, he was very compassionate to wounded spirits, he himself having been much afflicted. He was a man much in com-

munion with God, and had much acquaintance with God, and was careful in improvement therein: he was a *Jaab* in wrestling with God, a *Moses* that stood in the gap, an *Elijah* that prayed earnestly: the whole land was the better for such a person, being much with God; he made many addresses to him, and had much holy familiarity with him. And as in his publick performances he was very faithful and beneficial, so in his family and private he was very fruitful and serious. In a word (not to multiply much in this kind, you need it less in this Auditory, but only by way of grateful memorial) there was much of God and Christ in him, and he was a great example to his fellow-servants; there was much of this Treasure (spoken of in the Text) in this earthen Vessel; as in the matter of it, he was one of a Gospel spirit; and in the conveyances of it, he had great abilities for the work of the Ministry, and discharged it with a great deal of success. As he had this treasure in an earthen vessel, so his vessel, his frail body was no disparagement to him, but the advancement of the treasure, in setting forth the power to be of God; his outward man was much weak and worn away, but his inward man was upheld by the grace of God. His first work in the Ministry was in that place where my self have relation to; he was an assistant to my Predecessor (being then past labour) *Mr. Richard Corder*, and performed the work so well, that he was exceedingly beloved of *Mr. Corder*, and well beloved of the Parish, and other places. He left a good impression behind, and I found good effects by the foundation there laid. The Apostle *Paul* indeed desired not to work there where another had laid the foundation, but I thought it a great advantage that the foundation was laid by such a Master-builder. He was called into the Country to *Rugby* in *Warwickshire*, there he continued very fruitful, and did much good. For some occasion he removed, and returned into the

the City, and came into this place, where he continued about 18 or 19 years, discharged the work of the Lord carefully. I need not say much of his carriage in this place, I appeal to your own consciences. I may say of this servant of Christ, as the Apostle Paul said of himself, 1 Thels. 2. 10, 11. *Ye are his witnesses, and God also, how faithfully, and justly, and unblameably he behaved himself among you, as you know how he exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you (as a father doth his children) that ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.* Therefore there lies an engagement upon you to walk answerable to the truths he delivered, and to follow his steps, considering the end of his conversation. I shut up all in the words of the Apostle Paul to the Philippians, ch. 4. 9. *Those things which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in him, Do: and the God of Peace shall be with you.*

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FINIS.
